DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 932 EC 133 399

AUTHOR Lambour, Gary, Ed.; And Others
TITLE A Practical Guide to Institutionalizing Educational Innovations.
INSTITUTION Bank Street Coll. of Education, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, D.C. Div. of Innovation and Development.
PUB DATE Dec 80
CONTRACT 300-80-0752
NOTE 26p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; *Disabilities; *Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Federal Legislation; Political Influences; *Program Implementation

ABSTRACT

The booklet focuses on methods for institutionalizing innovative special education or other educational programs and was developed by the 1980 meeting of the Invisible College on the Institution of Change. An introductory section briefly considers the legal mandate of Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) to supply all handicapped children with a free and appropriate education, lists faculty of the Invisible College, summarizes how educational innovations are institutionalized, and notes the importance of political skills and organizational politics. A short section is given to each of the following components of the institutionalization process: planning and monitoring collaboratively, adapting internal and external expertise, revising materials to meet local needs, modeling desired behavior, training as an integral part of regular work meetings, building and maintaining support systems, and keeping at it. Considered in the section on trouble shooting are inaccurate diagnosis/needs assessment, staff turnover, and ineffective use of authority. (DB)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

# A Practical Guide to Institutionalizing Educational Innovations

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED204932

EC133399

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TADS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This publication was printed by TADS pursuant to contract number 300-80-0752 from the US Department of Education. Contractees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent Department of Education or Office of Special Education position or policy.

December, 1980

Creative Design and Typography by Ken Maule Associates, Inc., New York, N.Y.

Printed by the Technical Assistance Development System (TADS)
A Division of the Frank Porter Graham
Child Development Center
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Room 500, NCNB Plaza
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

# A Practical Guide to Institutionalizing Educational Innovations

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education
Division of Innovation and Development

*In Collaboration With*

Bank Street College of Education

Editors
**Gary Lambour,** *Ph.D.*
**David Rostetter,** *Ph.D.*
**Selma G. Sapir,** *M.A., A.B.D.*
**Ashaki H. Taha,** *A.B.*

## ERRATA

Pg 5 Public Law 94.142 mandates a free appropriate public education for all handicapped children.

Pg 7 Division of Innovation and Development

# CONTENTS

A LEGAL MANDATE . . . . . 5
THE INVISIBLE COLLEGE ON THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CHANGE . . . . . 6

HOW ARE EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS INSTITUTIONALIZED? . . . . . 8
WHY ARE POLITICAL SKILLS NECESSARY? . . . . . 10
WHAT ARE ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS? . . . . . 11

***INSTITUTIONALIZATION: COMPONENTS OF THE PROCESS IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT***

1 PLANNING AND MONITORING COLLABORATIVELY . . . 12
2 ADAPTING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EXPERTISE . . . . 13
3 REVISING MATERIALS TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS . . . . . 16
4 MODELING DESIRED BEHAVIOR . . . . . 17
5 TRAINING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF REGULAR WORK MEETINGS . . . . . 18
6 BUILDING AND MAINTAINING SUPPORT SYSTEMS . . . 19
7 KEEPING AT IT . . . . . 20

***TROUBLE SHOOTING***

INACCURATE DIAGNOSIS/NEEDS ASSESSMENT . . . . . 21
STAFF TURNOVER . . . . . 21
INEFFECTIVE USE OF AUTHORITY . . . . . 22

**SUMMARY** . . . . . 23

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . . 24

# A LEGAL MANDATE

Public Law 94.142 mandates a free and appropriate education for all handicapped children. To accomplish this, the U.S. Office of Special Education provides money and assistance for innovative programs.

In recent years, the Office's Division of Innovation and Development has taken steps to increase the capacity of its funded projects to institutionalize educational innovations. These efforts reveal that the quality, validity, scope and merit of an innovative project do not, in and of themselves, determine the success of a project. Rather, a range of seemingly unrelated factors play a significant role in either facilitating or hindering the institutionalization of an educational innovation.

## THE INVISIBLE COLLEGE ON THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CHANGE

The Invisible College on the Institutionalization of Change was held at Bank Street College of Education in New York City on March 12-14, 1980. The purpose of the Invisible College was to provide an opportunity for educational theorists and practitioners to interact in a supportive environment, share information, review theoretical perspectives critically, explore the application of specific educational theory and discover how and when research into planned change and institutionalization is converging. Significantly, the experience of practitioners working in the field confirmed the conceptual perspectives presented by theoreticians.

The Faculty of the Invisible College on the Institutionalization of Change included:

**J. Victor Baldridge,** *Higher Education Research Institute*
**Peter M. Bateman,** *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
**Nathan Brown,** *The New School of Social Research*
**Ronald G. Havelock,** *American University*
**Nancy J. Howes,** *State University of New York at Albany*
**Gordon Klopf,** *Bank Street College of Education*
**Gary Lambour,** *U.S. Office of Special Education*
**David Robinson,** *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*
**David Rostetter,** *U.S. Office of Special Education*
**Philip J. Runkel,** *University of Oregon*
**Selma G. Sapir,** *Bank Street College of Education*
**Leila Sussmann,** *Tufts University*
**Pascal L. Trohanis,** *Technical Assistance Development System*

***The Staff of the Invisible College on the Institutionalization of Change included:***

**Bank Street College of Education**

**Selma G. Sapir,** *Director*
*The Learning Lab*

**Ashaki H. Taha**
*Executive Assistant*

**Sergio A. Rainho**
*Media Specialist*

**U.S. Office of Special Education**

**Gary Lambour**
*Division of Innovative Development*

**David Rostetter**
*Division of Innovative Development*

This Guide reflects the ideas that emerged during the meeting of the Invisible College. It was designed to help project directors understand the complex process of institutionalization, recognize the necessity for developing political skills, be aware of potential pitfalls and learn methods of working with others successfully. It focuses on the non-technical factors that impact upon educational innovations, answers basic questions, provides practical political guidelines and identifies the essential components of the institutionalization process. The Guide is based upon, "Educational Innovation: The Political Dynamics of Change," by J. Victor Baldridge and "Institutionalizing Changes In Schools," by Philip J. Runkel, which were written especially for the Invisible College on the Institutionalization of Change.

## HOW ARE EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS INSTITUTIONALIZED?

**An innovation is considered successful when it has become an integral part of the original system: institutionalized.** Innovations do not come into a vacuum. They need receptive people, places and settings for learning.

There are many approaches to planned change. Three basic approaches to change are reflected in this document:

1. THE RATIONAL/EMPIRICAL APPROACH, which assumes that appropriate knowledge and data will permit change to occur.
2. THE POWER/COERCIVE APPROACH, in which authority mandates change.
3. THE NORMATIVE/RE-EDUCATIVE APPROACH, which involves participative experiences through in-service skill and attitudinal training.

ALL THREE approaches contain elements that are essential for innovation to be institutionalized within existing systems.

After the introduction of an innovation, a complex process must be operative in order for the innovation to be institutionalized. **The Institutionalization Process** consists of seven action-oriented components:

1. **Planning and Monitoring Collaboratively**
2. **Adapting Internal and External Expertise**
3. **Revising Materials to Meet Local Needs**
4. **Modeling Desired Behavior**
5. **Training As An Integral Part of Regular Work Meetings**
6. **Building and Maintaining Support Systems**
7. **Keeping At It**

Together, these **seven components** comprise a **process** that includes accumulation of knowledge, change mandated by authority and in-service skill and attitudinal training, all of which are essential for institutionalization to occur. It is critical that this process, and not just the innovative program, be institutionalized.

## WHY ARE POLITICAL SKILLS NECESSARY?

Inherent in the institutionalization process is the awareness that political skills are essential and that careful attention must be given to organizational politics.

The ability to start and successfully implement a new project requires an understanding of how schools and school districts function as political systems. New projects must contend with old programs that have a vested interest in protecting their domain. If the political dynamics are not carefully considered, a new project will die.

Organizations are hard to change, in large measure because people fear change and try to maintain the status quo. Educational innovations are particularly vulnerable because, often, the sponsors of a new project are skilled in one specialty — technical knowledge, program design or group dynamics. Rarely do they combine all three.

**Political skills** in the context of this Guide **are strategies for initiating and ensuring the survival of a project.** Political skills are necessary to:

- Influence the decision-making process,
- Marshall resources,
- Obtain organizational support,
- Obtain community support,
- Use authority effectively, and
- Protect the project from attacks by internal and external interest groups.

**Organizational politics provide the setting in which educational innovations occur.** This setting is comprised of internal and external interest groups that jockey for influence, struggle for power and claim the right to make decisions. The basic task of an effective change agent is to build a political base for influencing decisions.

**A key aspect of organizational politics is policy formation.** Policy decisions are critical and should not be considered routine. Major policies commit an organization to definite goals and determine the long-range destiny of the organization. Because policy decisions commit organizations to courses of action, people in organizations use their influence to see that their special interests are implemented in policy. Thus, policy-making becomes a major point of conflict — a watershed of interest group activity that permeates organizational life.

The first step in mounting an innovative program is planning and gathering initial support from the host organization. The primary task, then, becomes obtaining the commitment of other decision- makers who will assist in obtaining the consensus of their colleagues.

In most educational settings, a complex process of decision-by-committee is involved. The natural inertia of organizations can be overcome through skillful committee tactics. For this reason, **organizational politics often means committee politics.** Having influence over a committee often is equal to having influence over the decision.

# 1 PLANNING AND MONITORING COLLABORATIVELY

**Collaborative planning** must involve internal and external resources who are committed to the innovation. Generally, outside consultants are committed to facilitating innovations. Generating a similar internal commitment is, typically, a function of skillful committee politics. To begin with, it becomes essential to get on the right committee and, once on the committee, to do your homework. If possible, it's a good idea to become the committee chairperson or secretary. The chairperson sets the agenda and the secretary serves as the memory of the committee by reiterating important issues.

**Effective monitoring** is critical to the institutionalization of an innovation. It, too, must be collaborative — a shared process with a built-in self-correction capacity that is linked with planning.

In the initial stages of the innovative process, it is necessary to trace the decision flow on through to execution and to fight when issues are distorted. The truly effective change agent tenaciously monitors the decision-making process and draws attention to any lapses that may occur.

Extinction is part of the life-cycle of a project. Once an innovation has been institutionalized, it is important to remember that few good changes have eternal lives. Here, shared monitoring for effectiveness includes evaluating, judging and deciding whether performance meets expectation and whether the need for the innovation still exists. Effective monitoring and political expertise require the ability to extinguish a project that has been fought for and won when it has outlived its usefulness.

# ADAPTING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EXPERTISE: BUILDING A TEAM 2

Mutual adaptation concerns striking the appropriate balance between internal and external human resources. It builds on the strengths of each and neutralizes the weaknesses.

Both internal and external human resources have important assets and potential liabilities.

| *Assets* | *Liabilities* |
|---|---|
| **Internal Task Forces:** | |
| • Understand the local situation.<br>• Are committed to making an innovation work because they must live with it long after outside people have left.<br>• Have access to the channels for implementation. | • Can create overwhelming conflict.<br>• Can create political problems by recalling past problems and opening old wounds.<br>• Can be costly and problemmatic in terms of money, commitment, faculty and administrative time.<br>• May be so ego-involved and locked into old ways that they are unable to gain fresh perspectives on problems. |
| **External Consultants:** | |
| • Bring a fresh perspective and specialized expertise.<br>• Are isolated from internal politics and have greater objectivity.<br>• Have no ego-involvement in the status quo. | • Often fail to understand the dynamics of the unique local situation (indeed, their ignorance is commonly misinterpreted as objectivity).<br>• Lack channels for implementation.<br>• Lack ego-investment or the authority to implement recommendations.<br>• Can be used by an administrator to support his/her policies. |

Given the strengths and shortcomings of internal and external talent, the most successful strategy is the *combined* utilization of outside consultants with an internal task force. The internal task force might take the form of Runkel's *Cadre of Organizational Specialists.*

A Cadre of Organizational Specialists is a collegial group within a school district that works toward school improvement by providing consultation in organizational development to peers. The purpose of a Cadre is to:

- Increase the problem-solving capabilities of schools.
- Enable schools to cope with changes in roles, duties, interpersonal relations, coordination and communication.
- Build solutions to problems with the people who will implement them, and
- Improve the quality of work life.

**Cadres serve the process of:**

- Building Support Systems
- Adapting Internal and External Resources
- In-service Training
- Modeling Desired Behavior
- Coping with Staff Turnover

**There are ten guidelines for the establishment of a Cadre of Organizational Specialists.**

1. Draw members from all ranks.

2. Assign members part-time to the Cadre with financial compensation or lessening of other responsibilities.

3. Provide services by teams.

4. Let the Cadre respond to requests — do not impose Cadre services.

5. Plan at least three weeks of training for Cadre members.

6. Do not assign Cadre members to consult with units in which they are regularly employed.

7. Appoint a coordinator of the Cadre who will work at least half-time on the group's behalf.

8. Allow the Cadre to have at least 10 members.

9. Give the Cadre its own budget.

10. Provide time for the Cadre's own self-renewal; recruiting and training new members, acquiring new skills, renewing its own cohesiveness and planning for the future.

# 3 REVISING MATERIALS TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS

Innovation requires re-examination of the purpose and function of existing practices. Rather than being wasteful duplications of effort, it actually results in services that are more effective and more relevant to the needs of the target population.

Within the life cycle of an innovation, it is sometimes necessary to "re-invent the wheel." **Revision is a key element during needs assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and extinction.**

The revision process requires skillful organizational politics because it often threatens those with a vested interest in the status quo. The ability to marshall cooperation and defuse potentially explosive situations depends upon the degree to which political dynamics are understood and used.

The mutual adaptation of programmed innovations depends heavily upon the revision process, i.e., the ability of local systems to revise widely disseminated materials to meet their own needs.

# MODELING DESIRED BEHAVIOR 4

In order for desired behavior to become part of the system, it must first be modeled. Successful change agents are aware of the importance of **modeling both human relations and technical skills on an on-going basis.**

Modeling demonstrates concretely that an innovative approach works within the context of an imperfect environment and not just on paper or in some ideal setting. It is particularly valuable when working with seasoned professionals who avoid taking risks and are resistant to anything that is incongruent with their previous training and cumulative experience.

# 5 TRAINING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF REGULAR WORK MEETINGS

In-service training is an essential component of the innovation process. Training must be:

- Long-term,
- Conducted among intact work groups,
- An integral part of regular work meetings, and
- A combination of technical and human relations skills.

These four criteria for training serve to legitimize an innovation and confer status upon those who successfully adapt to it. In addition, in-service training must develop technical and human relations skills, giving special attention to examining the impact an innovation has on role inter-relationships.

# BUILDING AND MAINTAINING SUPPORT SYSTEMS 6

In order to get people within a system to buy into an innovation, it is necessary to **build consensus** about what is going to occur. To accomplish this critical task, it is essential to obtain support from external constituencies to influence the internal process. External interest groups exercise considerable influence over the policy-making process. External pressures and formal control by outside agencies, especially in public institutions, are powerful shapers of internal decision processes.

An effective way of structuring broad-based social support for an innovation is to **build coalitions** that involve outside groups, as well as inside groups. Programs for the education of the handicapped owe their very existence to outside forces prompting internal educational innovation. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the powerful nature of coalition-building and how to use it to create strong support systems.

# 7 KEEPING AT IT

During every phase of a project's life cycle, it is necessary to **keep at it.** Politically, most decisions are made by people who persist. Power belongs to those who stay long enough to exercise it.

At the beginning, the person who sticks with a committee is likely to have enormous impact on the decision to undertake a project, fund and staff it. During the implementation phase, steps to defuse potentially volatile political situations must be taken on an on-going basis. When a project reaches the final stage in its life cycle, skillful politics are essential to effectively deal with attempts to perpetuate a project that has outlived its usefulness.

Overall, **three years is the minimum** amount of time for an innovation to be institutionalized.

**Three common impediments to successful institutionalization are:**

## INACCURATE DIAGNOSIS/NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Following the introduction of an innovation, an accurate, comprehensive needs assessment is an absolutely essential part of the project planning process. To avoid an inaccurate diagnosis in the planning phase of a project, consider these **"Don'ts"**:

- **Don't** allow preconceived solutions to distort decisions within your own power domain.
- **Don't** be superficial. Dig deep enough to get at real problems and needs.
- **Don't** chase grants mindlessly. Pursue only those that have a real connection to legitimate organizational needs.
- **Don't** be swayed by outside consultants who often have a vested interest in a particular type of project or approach that may be unsuited to local conditions.

## STAFF TURNOVER

Staff turnover, particularly that of key staff members, severely undermines the strength of an innovative project. It is therefore essential that times and procedures be established for the training and socialization of new members to replace those who leave.

## INEFFECTIVE USE OF AUTHORITY

Be aware of the limitations of formal authority. Within bureaucratic systems, formal authority is severely limited by the political pressure and bargaining power of interest groups. Officials must jockey between building viable positions among powerful segments.

Nevertheless, using the authority of a formal system allows deadlines on the decision-making process to be set, a functional division of labor and rewards to be established for people whose behavior helps promote the change. Rewards can be in the form of money, prestige or public acclaim.

Administrative support is a life or death matter for an innovative project. It is absolutely essential that careful attention be given to a project's structural and administrative location within a system. Effective use of authority can place allies in the vanguard of the people responsible for the implementation and execution of decisions.

Innovations attached to programs in the middle ranks of a bureaucracy usually fail quickly. New projects need the protection of a powerful administrator who can shelter them from attack from other administrators who feel threatened. In addition and significantly, authority is necessary to commit funds. The quickest and most effective way to kill a project is financial starvation.

**Institutionalization requires a clear understanding of the importance and methods of:**

- **integrating approaches to change,**
- **becoming skillful in organizational politics**
- **avoiding common pitfalls and**
- **making certain the Seven Components of the Institutionalization Process are in place.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. We are especially grateful to President Ruopp, Dorothy Carter and Anne Darling of Bank Street College of Education, who gave generously of their time and talents.